

Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 28 October 2020
Report Title	Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan
Cabinet Member	Cllr Monique Bonney, Cabinet Member for Economy and Property
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director Regeneration
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services
Lead Officer	Lyn Newton, Economy and Community Services Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan consultation feedback 2. To endorse the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the July Cabinet, Members were asked to note the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan and proposed consultation ahead of Cabinet endorsement in early autumn 2020.
- 1.2 Results are appended for information and Members are now asked to endorse the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan and priorities. The Visitor Economy Framework 2018-2023 was adopted by the Council in 2017 and a budget of up to £250,000 was allocated from the shared business rate pool of which £100,000 has been spent.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan has been developed through both an evidence base of research and surveys alongside internal and external workshops and this established an initial action plan for wider 'sense checking'. In addition, a significant amount of work was undertaken through an internal informal working group ahead of the consultation to ensure Council priorities are reflected. The consultation was undertaken at a time when the visitor economy began to emerge from the pandemic into what the government is describing as a ten-year road to recovery.
- 2.2 Monitoring government announcements through Visit England and Visit Kent will remain a priority ensuring that Swale is well placed to take advantage of any emerging recovery initiatives and funding opportunities. For the Visitor Economy

Framework Action Plan to be a success it is essential that there is shared ownership across different stakeholder groups as well as Council service units.

3 Proposals

- 2.1 Following the period of consultation and the continuous work of the internal informal working group work, Members are advised that there is broad support for partnership working along with the unchanged priorities appended in respect of delivering the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan. Partnership working has the potential to increase capacity for project delivery too given the breadth of the plan, resources and aspirations in what is a tight timeframe. Partner engagement and promotion of partnership working needs to be better promoted and there is opportunity to use those sector partners to build and promote case studies and to share best practice as part of the Council's 'good news'.
- 2.2 With the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors currently struggling there is need to move quickly to deliver priority actions which will strengthen and develop the sector in a post pandemic era. Working with strategic partners such as Visit Kent, South East Museums Development Network and other Districts will add-value in terms of access to funding, marketing and promotion, business and skills training and joint working. Members are asked to note the feedback following consultation and to endorse the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan and the priorities as appended.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 To ensure a collaborative response to both sector recovery and to build partnership that the proposal as outlined is the preferred option to build sector confidence and longer-term economic stability and growth. To do nothing would not be a sensible approach in the current environment where the visitor economy (tourism, leisure and hospitality) has been severely impacted with a loss of trading and income opportunities.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan has been developed through both an evidence base of research and surveys, internal and external workshops which have identified and prioritised actions. The internal informal working group has also used its meetings to re-prioritise actions based on Council priorities ahead of wider consultation over the summer period. The consultation has been widely promoted through both the Council's and Visit Swale's social media platforms which has resulted in a greater number of interactions/impressions/'likes'; the E-bulletins promoted by Visit Swale, Active Swale and Swale Means Business; a two-page media feature in mid-July, BBC Radio and BBC South East.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Priority 1 Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all</p> <p>1.6 Implement the Visitor Economy Framework to increase investment, address new visitor demands and grow the value of the sector to the Swale economy</p> <p>Priority 2 Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges</p> <p>2.3 Establish a special projects fund to provide much needed investment in the Brough's public realm and open spaces</p> <p>2.4 Recognise and support the local heritage to give people pride in the place they live and boost the local tourism industry</p> <p>Priority 3 Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone</p> <p>3.5 Promote wellbeing and enjoyment of life by signposting and encouraging a wide range of sporting, cultural and other leisure activities appropriate and accessible to each age group</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>For the Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan to be a success it is essential that there is shared ownership across different stakeholder groups as well as Council service units.</p> <p>When the Framework was agreed in 2017 a budget of up to £250,000 was allocated from special projects fund for delivery of actions to 2023. A number of key projects have already been delivered against an earlier action plan but £150,000 is still to be allocated. It is envisaged that whilst some activities will be delivered by the Council some monies will be used as partnership leverage and match-funding to ensure value for money</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>Work within the visitor economy sector is non-statutory. Individual actions and projects would be costed and are subject to normal procurement rules</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>At this stage there are no known crime and disorder implications</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	<p>The walking and cycling initiatives are likely to positively impact on air quality and reduce car emissions. Work to enhance open spaces should contribute to biodiversity net gains in addition to longer term improving air quality</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Some project initiatives such as walking and cycling and other leisure activity will positively improve the individual's health and</p>

	wellbeing as well as access to improved lifestyle choices through exercise, healthy eating and access to outdoor destinations (both free and paid for)
Risk Management and Health and Safety	At this stage there are no known risks, but individual projects and activities would be reviewed on a project by project basis
Equality and Diversity	At this stage there are no known negative impacts that might promote unlawful discrimination or advance inequality
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no identified implications

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: [Swale Visitor Economy Framework Action Plan]
- Appendix II [Prioritised Actions]
- Appendix III [Consultation Feedback]

8 Background Papers

None